

# What's Happening?

A NEWSLETTER

FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF MAINE MEDICAL CENTER

## Breakthrough treatment for epilepsy now available at MMC

### *A pacemaker for the brain to reduce epileptic seizures*

Maine Medical Center is now offering a breakthrough treatment for epilepsy, an implantable vagus nerve stimulator or "pacemaker for the brain."

Neurologist Linda Brown, MD, recently supervised the implantation of a patient with this revolutionary new device. This is the first new treatment modality for epilepsy in more than 100 years.

Maine Medical Center is the first in Portland to offer the treatment for patients with refractory epilepsy — those who are unable to control epileptic seizures with traditional drug therapy or surgery.

The implantable device, approximately the size of a small pocket watch, is implanted in the patient's chest, much like a pacemaker. It consists of a generator and a nerve stimulator electrode which transmits antiepileptic electrical signals to the brain through the vagus nerve in the neck. The vagus nerve controls activity between the brain and the internal organs.

The device is activated in the  
**IMPLANTS, SEE P. 3**

## *Keeping in Touch*

## Preparing to thrive in the future

Maine Medical Center has enjoyed much success and continues to thrive, largely as a result of your commitment to the well-being of our patients and our community. Our success to date is a tribute to hard work, to our prominent place in the market, and to the trust people have in the work we do here.

We want to make sure that success continues, in the face of the real changes happening in healthcare, both locally and beyond. Patients, insurance companies, employers, and government have increasing expectations of us to demonstrate the quality and value of what we do. To continue to be successful, we must respond. We're fortunate that we still have time to do this. We need to get started, and that's why I'm taking the step of writing to you.

As part of our response, we're about to embark on an initiative that will involve and affect each and every one of us. Its objective is to measure and improve our performance in many different ways. The way we do business at Maine Medical Center will improve, both from our patients' standpoint

and from ours. Most importantly, this initiative will ensure MMC's ability to continue to serve its community by providing healthcare, community services, and secure employment.

Managed care and competition have made a late arrival in Maine, and the growth of managed care has been slower than anyone expected. Today, about 29% of Maine people are covered by some sort of managed care plan, and that

number will top 34% by this time next year. Among other things, that will mean more people will get the care they need outside the hospital, and MMC will likely see fewer patients admitted. Patients who are admitted will be sicker and need more care. It is very clear that whether from the government or from private insurance companies,

**FUTURE, SEE P. 2**

*The way we do business at Maine Medical Center will improve, both from our patients' standpoint and from ours.*

## In This Issue

<i>Valet Parking</i>	P. 3
<i>Scarborough Campus Award</i>	P. 5
<i>Quality Detectives</i>	P. 6



## **FUTURE, FROM P. 1**

we will be living with lower payments for the care we deliver. We also will face new and serious competitive threats both locally and regionally, and we will have to compete on both quality and cost.

This performance improvement initiative will help us prepare for a future that will look very different, a future in which we will be challenged to provide even higher quality care at lower prices than we do today. By preparing now, we can go into that future thoughtfully and carefully.

The challenge to us is simply this: In order to be prepared, we have to demonstrably improve our overall quality of care and service levels, and also strengthen our financial position over a three-year period by what we estimate to be \$38 million. We believe we can do this by a combination of decreasing our costs and increasing our revenues. We have to accomplish \$5 million of that goal this year. Over the three-year period, this amounts to about a 12% reduction in our budget. This is a challenging but reachable target, and is in the same range as targets that have been successfully reached by similar hospitals.

The first step in doing this will be to reduce our non-labor costs, finding ways of spending our precious dollars for supplies and services more efficiently. We also will be looking at "work redesign", which will help us provide services in more efficient ways, possibly with fewer people, but certainly by redefining some jobs to better and more efficiently provide services to patients. The objective here will be to uncover ways to change the way we deliver our services — the work each of us does — to make it more efficient and effective, not to add work for anyone.

There likely will be cases in

which we redistribute resources from one area to another. We will be looking to introduce new services and enhance existing services in order to boost revenue and market share. It's likely that from your everyday work here, each and

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every one of you knows ways we could do this. We'll be looking for your help and advice, and the guidance of the physicians in the community.

If all this sounds like a major undertaking, it is. And I know you all have one question in common: *what does this mean to me?* We don't know exactly what changes this initiative will bring, but we are making some commitments to you up front:

- There will be opportunities for career growth as we explore new opportunities.

- Employee participation in the initiative will be sought and valued.

- Our salary and benefit structure will remain competitive.

- If staff reductions are necessary, we will attempt to achieve them through attrition, early retirement incentives, and other volun-

tary means. We believe that involuntary staff reductions are a last resort, and we will try to avoid them.

- We will offer retraining for those who may need to change jobs within MMC.

We know that if we are to change the way we do business at Maine Medical Center, we will have to do it our own way. We are getting help from an external consulting firm, to take advantage of their experience and expertise, but not to make decisions and implement changes. We will do that ourselves, for ourselves. We have a long history of striving for higher quality, and a long history of fiscal responsibility. We also have a long history of trusting our own people to do the right thing, and we will continue that trust throughout this initiative and beyond.

So we are using a consulting firm, CSC Healthcare, only as a guide and advisor. The consultants have substantial experience in performance improvement, and they do have a positive track record of helping their clients, but they also are convinced that the clients have to make the decisions and do the work themselves. In fact, a hand-picked team of our own people — to be announced soon — will work with the consultant as staff for the initiative.

As the initiative unfolds, you will be hearing much more about how we will proceed and how you can be involved. We are embarking on a venture that is both daunting and exciting, and one that I will guarantee will affect all of us. We're doing it for the right reasons, and we're committed to doing it the right way. Having come to know the staff at the Medical Center, I am very confident in our bright future together.

Vincent S. Conti  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer



**IMPLANTS, FROM P. 1**  
physician's office. It is preprogrammed to regularly send small shocks to the nerve. For example, it can pulse for 30 seconds every five minutes, 24 hours a day, to stop epileptic seizures. Patients can also stop seizures during the intervals by waving a magnet over the area of the chest where the device resides. This delivers an additional dose of stimulation.

Commonly called an "electrical storm in the brain", epilepsy is a neurological disorder characterized by disturbances in the normal electrical functions of the brain often resulting in seizures. A seizure is a disturbance in the electrical cavity of the brain which can cause various noticeable symptoms from a twitching of the fingers to unrecognizable speech to even unconsciousness.

There are 2.5 million people in the United States who have epilepsy, making it the second leading

neurological disease in the country. While a person can develop epilepsy for a variety of reasons – including genetic predisposition, head injury, or stroke – in more than 70 percent of the cases, there is no known cause.

Drugs are effective for about 80 percent of those people who have epilepsy and surgery helps about 5 percent of those who do not respond to drugs. This new device is an alternative for those who are not appropriate for

drugs or surgery.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the device for epilepsy in July 1997, and there are now more than 3,000 people using it.

"I am very pleased to offer this new therapy to the people of southern Maine," said Dr. Brown. "This offers a treatment alternative to patients with uncontrollable epilepsy, giving them hope for a higher quality of life."

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**"This offers a treatment alternative to patients with uncontrollable epilepsy, giving them hope for a higher quality of life."**

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## **Epilepsy information, support available**

The Epilepsy Resource Center in Portland has materials to help anyone in the state who is dealing with epilepsy. Many videotapes and other resources are available by calling 1-800-660-7832. The phone is answered by someone who has epilepsy.

Support groups meet regularly in Portland, Bangor, and Damariscotta. For information, call the Resource Center. Anyone with epilepsy/seizures and their family members, friends, or co-workers are invited to attend the support groups.

## **Valet Parking Program**

The current Valet Parking Program was put in place to assist patients who needed to access the ASU and Emergency Department during the construction that eliminated parking in the Emergency lot.

Many patients used the program; not only ASU and ED patients, but many who were here for other services as well. Valets parked more than 100 vehicles a day from both the Admitting and Emergency Entrances.

Now that direct access to both the ED and ASU has been restored, the valet program is being modified. Valet service will be available only at the ED entrance during the hours in the schedule provided below. There will also be a courtesy attendant in the Admitting Lot, Monday through Friday, to provide assistance and directions to customers entering there.

Patient parking spaces in the Emergency lot have been reduced from 24 to 4, with one reserved for handicapped drivers. In order to meet the parking needs of ED and ASU patients, space will be provided for visitors to self-park in the Gilman Garage. There will be signs provided to direct these patients to the garage at the "L" entrance. This change should not impact employee parking as these are spaces that have been held for valet use for the last couple of years. Use of these spaces will be monitored by Security.

### **Valet Program Schedule**

Monday–Friday 0600–2300 hrs

Saturday–Sunday 0700–2230 hrs

### **Admitting Lot Courtesy**

Monday–Friday 0630–1500 hrs

Please feel free to call David Young, Security Director, at X2175, if you have any questions concerning these changes.



## Picture this...

### *MMC's New Photo Contest For Kids*

Calling all shutterbugs under the age of 18! If your child loves to take pictures, don't miss *The Photo Contest For Kids* February 15-20.

Formerly the *Kid's Photo Contest*, this new competition gives children from birth to 18 years of age an opportunity to compete. In the past, the contest involved children as only the *subject* of photographs – now the lens has turned. Kids are also encouraged to actually take the photographs in *The Photo Contest For Kids*.

Photos can still be submitted from families of their younger models, ages 0-5, but now the older kids will be able to submit photos they themselves have taken.

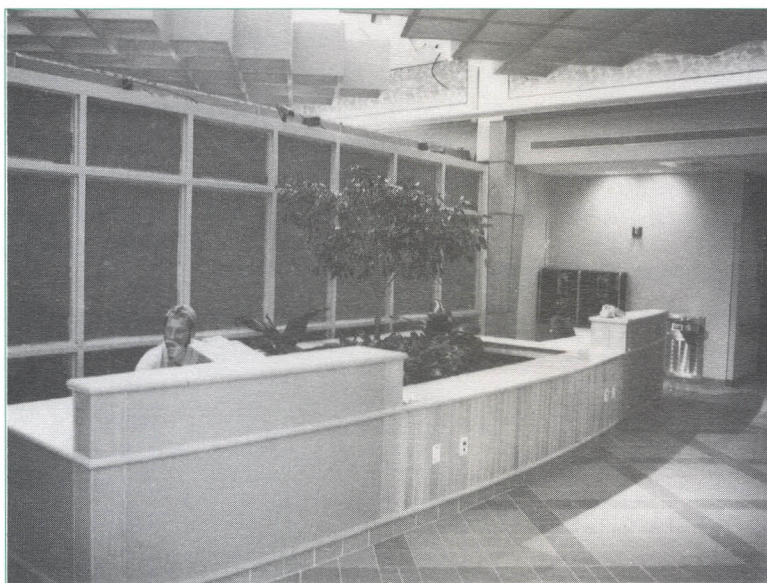
Now is the time to start clicking – searching for that one great moment captured on film, kid-style.

This year the event is expanded to include several new categories and age groups.

*The Photo Contest For Kids* is a pediatric fundraiser. Prizes will be awarded, but the focus is on raising money for children's programs and services at the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at MMC. There is no cost to submit entries, but there is a \$1 fee for each vote placed. Photographers can solicit votes from family, friends, and neighbors. Mall patrons can also vote for their favorites.

All entries will be exhibited at the Maine Mall Center Court and then returned to the people who submitted them. The winners of each category will be displayed in the Flower Box at MMC.

Snap to it!



Phase One of the Emergency Department's renovations was completed in November. Phase Two is scheduled to be completed this Spring.



A Retirement Tea was held for Micky Lamb, second from the right, in the OR Surgeon's Lounge December 17.



Diane Dussault, left, retired from her position as Director of the School of Surgical Technology. Staff held a retirement party for her on December 18.



## What's Cooking at MMC?

### *Tom Allain wins award for Scarborough Campus*

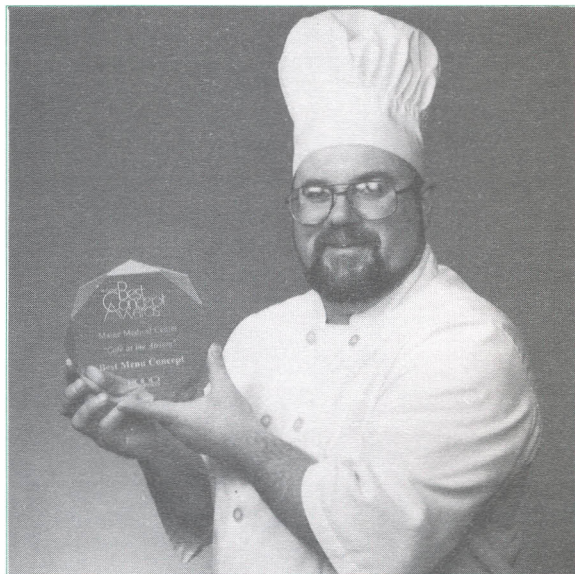
When the Scarborough Cafe was designed, equipment was purchased to support a heart healthy menu concept. It worked. In November, Tom Allain, Chef Manager at the Scarborough Campus, was awarded for Best Menu Concept from Food Management Magazine. The magazine wrote,

*"To reinforce the high quality healthcare mission of Maine Medical Center, [Food and Nutrition Services] chose to emphasize the healthful Mediterranean diet – no burgers and fries here – while striking a balance between upscale, eclectic items and lower cost items (pizza) to appeal to the wide range of people found in a community-based medical clinic."*

With that success in their back pocket, the Maine Medical Center Food and Nutrition Services Department will follow-up with changes and additions to the MMC Bramhall Cafeteria this summer.

"The MMC Cafeteria was designed in the late 1970s and renovated in the early 1980s when people ate differently," says Mary Keysor, MSRD, Director of Nutrition Services.

MMC will undergo renovations from August through December 1999 to more closely reflect the change in how we eat. A healthy menu design will be created and supported by new, necessary



AV Photo

equipment.

"The redesign will give us more refrigerator space for healthy salads, an expanded deli section for healthy deli and soup entrees, and a more upscale sandwich selection," says Keysor.

One of the most significant changes is that the grille won't be the most dominant feature. "People will have to look for the fat!" says Keysor.

The next step will be to redesign the seating area.

Tables and booths will be set up to create more intimate seating choices. Some seats will even have a view!

Keysor hopes that the second phase will take place next year.

A temporary food set-up in the seating area will be in place while renovations take place later this year.

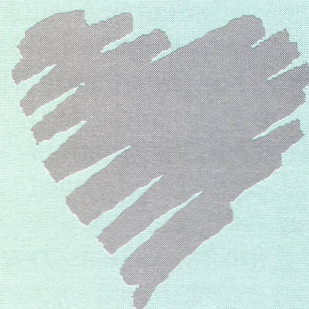
*Valentine's Day  
is Coming!*



*Don't Forget Your  
Loved Ones*



*The Flower Box  
will be open  
Saturday, February 13  
and  
Sunday, February 14*



*Call 871-4707*



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## Looking for Quality in all the Right Places!



AV Photo

Maybe this isn't what Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had in mind when he created his famous character Sherlock Holmes, but the Quality Fair Planning Team is using Holmes-like deductive reasoning while "*Looking for Quality in all the Right Places*." The fair, which takes place in late March, will serve in part as a rehearsal for the upcoming JCAHO visit.

The Planning Committee is (from front left) Dee Roberts, CPQI, Elaine Toher, Audio Visual Resources, Deb Tillotson, Quality, Jeff Gregory, CPQI, Martha Davoli, Public Information, Cindy Bridgham, CPQI, Suzanne Parenteau, Brighton FirstCare, TerryLynn McGarvey, Nursing Staffing, Steve Rohman, Engineering, and Mary Keysor, Food and Nutrition Services.

Look for more information in upcoming issues of *What's Happening*, and start Looking for Quality in all the Right Places!

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## New hospital ID badges

In 1998, the Security Department made a change in Maine Medical Center's employee ID format. The changes included updating the logo, and adding a bar code and the fire plan. Security staff have been working hard to upgrade all existing ID badges. This has been done by units as they became aware of the changes and by word of mouth as individuals stopped in the office. Staff feel they

are caught up at this time, and are asking that staff check their IDs. They should have the new hospital logo, a red bar code on the front, and RACE (the hospital fire plan) on the back. If an employee's current ID does not have these items, they should stop by the Security Office for an update.

Hospital policy states that all employees will wear their ID

badges while at work. Compliance is very high: during spot checks, Security staff found some units at 100%. Others, however, had less. We want to be at 100% compliance when JCAHO visits this year.

The new ID process is very quick and user-friendly. If you have lost your ID or need an update, please stop by the studio in the Security Office to have a new one made.



# Marketplace

In order to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to use the Marketplace, ads may be placed *once only*. Repeats will be permitted only on a space-available basis.

## FOR SALE

1985 Audi 5000, maroon, 4 DR, automatic, new tires, new parts, sunroof, climate control, AM/FM cassette, great condition. \$3,500. Call 775-5248.

Nordic Track Ellipse E-7 Model. 1 year old. \$350. Call 797-0057 evenings.

Cape located in Country Garden area of South Portland. Near schools, mall, bus line. 3 - 4 BR, family room, garage. All appliances included. \$115,000. Open house 2/21 & 2/28. Call 775-4033.

1988 Pontiac Firebird, T-roofs, low mileage, black w/silver. Asking \$2,500. Call 799-9069 evenings or weekends.

1991 Dodge Power Ram 150 half-ton pickup truck. 318 V8 auto, 4 WD, AC, long bed, 8,700 miles. Excellent condition. \$6,800 (below book appraisal). Call 892-7427.

21 cu. ft. GE refrigerator/freezer. Icemaker w/dispenser in door. Great condition, almond. Asking \$150. Nintendo entertainment system (1991) w/8 games, \$15. Sega (1990) w/4 games, \$10. Call 829-6051.

Computer: Apple II GS, monitor, Image writer II, Printshop, Publish It, disks, print, labels, original manuals, excellent condition. \$85. Call 767-2591.

1994 Nissan Maxima. White/black leather interior. 6 CD changer, cell phone, remote start, 80K. Well maintained. \$9,500. Automatic, includes bra. Call 878-2025 leave message.

Kenmore apt.- size all-in-one washer/dryer, runs on 110 wiring, \$325. New 5 CU FT upright freezer, \$150. Day bed, \$80. Storm door, \$65. Call 761-3914 or e-mail OLD MOM4@WEBTV.NET.

## FOR RENT

Yarmouth: 3 BR oceanfront home,

private rock beach. \$1,095/mo. plus utilities. Call 846-0440.

Apts. located at Holt Hall w/unique and distinct floor plans. Choose from studio, 1 and 2 BR apts, 1 BR pent-house apts. Air conditioning, gas fireplaces, washer/dryer. Call 780-1888.

Home for rent in fine Yarmouth neighborhood. 4 - 5 BR, 2 BA, fireplace, heated 2 car garage. Large yard, hardwood floors up and new carpet down, new paint. Available in February. Lease, sec. dep., ref. \$1,375/mo. Call 671-0358 days or 846-6261 evenings.

Alfred: Cozy, recently re-decorated 1 BR 2nd floor apt. Includes appliances, new BA. \$525/mo. plus utilities. Monitor heat, attic floor insulated, new combination storm windows, washer/dryer on premises. Approximately 15 minutes to exit 4/ME Turnpike. Credit & personal references, sec. dep. Call 324-0990.

Carleton St. near MMC. 1 BR apt, 2nd floor, off-street parking for 1 car, indoor cat OK. \$675/mo. includes heat & hot water. Available immediately. Call 865-3813, leave message.

So. Portland: 6-month rental, May-Oct. Newly renovated Cape w/2 BR, partially furnished, in convenient location. N/S. \$800/mo. + utils. Call 799-0594.

Rent a cottage on Long Pond in Belgrade Lakes, ME. 2 BR, sleeps 6, stone fireplace. Rent weeks available from May until September. Call 767-0136 or see web site at <http://www.cottage.indianet.org>.

## ROOMMATE WANTED

32 YO professional female looking for roommate to share 2 BR apt; separate phone line. \$325/mo. includes heat, hot water & elec. Available 3/1/99, possibly sooner. Located in the Morrill's Corner area. Great, sunny, spacious apt. Call 878-5721.

The deadlines for announcement-length items and **MARKETPLACE** are Dec. 23 for the Jan. 6 issue and Jan. 6 for the Jan. 20 issue

*All items must be in writing.* Information for *What's Happening* may be sent by interoffice mail to the Public Information Department, by email to FILIPL, or by fax to 871-6212.

## CHILD CARE

Quality child care. 24 YO non-smoker. Bachelors degree in social work. Many years experience in child care. References. Call 283-8299.

## WANTED

Looking for transcription work & typing projects. Reasonable rates. Call 879-7136.

Rug shampooer, self-propelled lawn mower and gas grill. Call 773-1934 after 5:00 or anytime on weekends.

Full-time, live-in position in lovely No. Deering neighborhood. Free room and board plus \$17,000/annual income. Flexible hours. Requires personal care of 78 YO gentleman confined to wheelchair, light housekeeping, errands, companionship. Must be non-smoker and have drivers license. Call 797-3784.

## SERVICES

Available for residential cleaning. Experience, excellent references. Reasonable rates. Call 767-6320.

## Mission Abroad

Dr. Jeffrey B. Doss and Dr. Robert S. Schaedel will travel with three staff members to Pereiri, Colombia, South America later this month to join *Healing the Children*. If you can donate children's clothing or medical supplies, please contact Judy at 774-2611.



## What's Happening?

### at Maine Medical Center

**All month** Healthviews. Xtra TV 4, Thursdays, 2000-2100 hours.  
**Feb. 9** ACLS. 0715-1620 hours.  
**&Feb.23** 0730-1600 hours.  
 See p.8  
**Feb. 15-** The Photo Contest For Kids.  
**Feb. 20** Maine Mall Center Court.

## NEW EMPLOYEES

**DISTRIBUTION:** John Carlson,  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES:** Jolynn Dow, Dale Peaco, Debra Salgado  
**MATERIALS MANAGEMENT:** Stephanie Fox  
**NURSING:** Elaine Caron, Virginia Dailey, Tammy Dunham, Amy-Lyn Gumprecht, Debra Perrault, Laurie Sanderson, Jill Sawyer, Cynthia Skidgel, Sherrill Taub  
**RADIOLOGY:** Josephine Watson



### FRESHSTART

**Free four week  
Stop Smoking group**

**Dana Education Center  
Classroom 9**

**Wednesdays: 4-5:30 p.m.  
March 3 through March 24**

**To register or for  
more information,  
call Pulmonary/  
Critical Care  
Medicine at  
871-2662**



**The Volunteer Office  
seeks donations of  
paperback books and  
pre-read current magazines.  
Donations may be left in  
the MMC Volunteer Office,  
located on the 1st floor of  
the Maine General Building.**

### What's for lunch in the Cafeteria?

**Call K-A-F-E (x5233)  
to find out what's  
on the menu!**

**You'll hear the soups,  
hot entrees, heart healthy,  
vegetarian,  
and grill offerings  
for the day.**

### PALS Course

(Pediatric Advanced Life Support)

**Day 1 March 23, 1999**

0730-1630 hours

**Day 2 March 25, 1999**

0730-1030 hours

### ACLS Course

(Advanced Cardiac Life Support)

**Day 1 April 6, 1999**

0715-1620 hours

**Day 2 April 13, 1999**

0730-1600 hours

Courses held at Turning Point and  
sponsored by  
Sandra Bagwell, MD, Chief,  
Department of Critical Care

David Kissin, BS, RRT, Course Manager

Call Cheryl Bickford, Course Coordinator,  
871-4173 for details.

*What's Happening?* is published every other week at Maine Medical Center for members of the hospital community and for friends of the institution throughout Maine and northern New England. Comments, questions, and suggestions may be addressed to the Office of Public Information, MMC, 22 Bramhall Street, Portland, Maine 04102-3175. (207) 871-2196. Editor: Wayne L. Clark.

- ☐ Change name or address as shown on address label.
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# What's Happening?

MAINE MEDICAL CENTER 22 BRAMHALL STREET PORTLAND, ME 04102-3175